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1

INTRODUCTION

Charles Martindale

I

SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS, CIRCUMSPICE. Ovid is everywhere. His importance for European literature is immense. Medievalists call a whole epoch the *aetas Ovidiana* (what this means in practice is shown in Christopher Grocock's essay on Gilo of Paris). A list of the major English poets alone on whom he has been a key influence is impressive: Chaucer, Gower (in some ways the leading Ovidian of the Middle Ages, as Bruce Harbert shows), Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Pope. On the arts, both fine and decorative, his influence has been at least as great. Ovidian stories have provided the material for innumerable musical compositions – the first opera, Peri's *Dafne* (*c.* 1597), had an Ovidian subject. He has influenced the history of gardening from the Renaissance onwards: the interplay of nature and art, the exotic world of the antique gods conjured up in grotto, grove and statue, the shifts and transformations which bedazzle the visitor's eyes, including automata worked by hydraulic systems to create metamorphic effects – all these and more are the gift of Ovid to the garden.[1] He can turn up in the most unexpected places: one may find a story from the *Metamorphoses* decorating a medieval cathedral;[2] a bizarre pottery group of Cephalus and Procris was issued in the 1790s in grimy Burslem by the Staffordshire firm of Lakin and Poole.[3] In short, from the twelfth century onwards Ovid has had a more wide-ranging impact on the art and culture of the West than any other classical poet. Only the critics have stood aloof.

This is a book about Ovid's influence, but it is also a book about Ovid himself. 'The greatest commentator on Virgil is Dante, the greatest commentator on Ovid – Shakespeare'; so writes J. K. Newman.[4] That artists are the best interpreters of other artists is a slogan containing truth and falsity in about equal measure. Critics have their own job to do, and artists, for all their intuitive insights, are often both idiosyncratic and egocentric when responding to the work of others. Yet in the case of Ovid the claim has a larger measure of truth than usual. There is a striking contrast between the rich and varied response of artists, and the comparative poverty of the critical tradition, which has often done little more than reiterate the complaints made in antiquity by the school-

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masterly Quintilian and the Senecas, father and son. David Hopkins shows how this dichotomy existed within the same man in the case of Dryden, who criticised Ovid along familiar lines in his prose, while responding to him with instinctive sensitivity in his translations.

There are many reasons for studying the afterlife of a great writer;[5] here it is enough to say that tradition is a two-way process and closely bound up with hermeneutics, as T. S. Eliot observed in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent':

> what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are re-adjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past.[6]

Since the notion that the present affects the past may seem unduly mystical and anti-historical, it is worth trying to show briefly what Eliot's formulation might mean. For example a development of a distinct genre of science fiction has allowed the critic to identify what we might call the science fiction impulse in the literature of the past, as in Lucian, *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Divine Comedy*. Again it was Sainte-Beuve in the nineteenth century who first popularised the notion of Virgil as the poet of the tears of things, because the Romantic movement in poetry had made it easier to identify such qualities in Virgil. Texts – all texts to an extent and great texts in particular – are complex and multi-faceted; no reading, even a true reading, can be more than partial. No reader or age can notice all that is potentially present, and any reader will be more inclined to notice what chimes with present preoccupations, whether his own or those of his society. When an important new work is produced, it may thus alter not perhaps an earlier work, strictly speaking, but the elements in that work we are able to see. Furthermore sometimes later artistic responses to a work of art are quite straightforwardly the best way of approaching it. The study of the tradition can help us to relativise ourselves, see the works of the past with fresh eyes, escape our own parochialism; it is important to avoid the teleological assumption that only the responses of one's own age have any validity. Certainly the tradition can often teach us to understand Ovid better. Pythagoras' speech in *Metamorphoses* 15, which provides a philosophical *ratio* for a poem about flux, is generally not taken seriously today; it is regarded either as parody (by the more sympathetic) or as sheer opportunism to give some semblance of unity to the poem.[7] Of course the speech is not philosophy of a technical kind like Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, but it is philosophical poetry, as earlier ages had no difficulty in understanding. Dryden, who excelled in such writing, thought it 'the masterpiece of the whole *Metamorphoses*'.[8]

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Shakespeare, obsessed throughout his work by time and change, echoes lines from it in several sonnets, for example at the beginning of 60 (cf. *Met.* 15.181–3, with Golding's translation):

> Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
> So do our minutes hasten to their end.

Spenser pays tribute to the philosophical poet in Ovid in the Mutabilitie Cantos and elsewhere in the *Faerie Queene*, as Colin Burrow shows.

Those who think that Ovidian wit is inconsistent with seriousness might reflect on the kaleidoscopic tones in the Elizabethan epyllia inspired by Ovid, discussed by Laurence Lerner. Those who believe that metamorphosis is no more than a structural device in the *Metamorphoses* might contemplate Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* in which the youthful sculptor, with impressive virtuosity, shows the flesh of Daphne at the very moment of transformation (Pl. 10b).[9] A moralising epigram was added at the suggestion of the future Pope Urban VIII while the work was in progress:

> quisquis amans sequitur fugitivae gaudia formae
> fronde manus implet baccas seu carpit amaras.
>
> (Whatever lover pursues the joys of fleeting beauty
> fills his hands with leaves or plucks bitter fruit.)

Bernini conveys the brio of Ovid's story with its numerous witty touches (for example as Ovid's Apollo pursues Daphne he offers to run slower if she will do the same, and also incongruously delivers a kind of hymn to his own powers, *Met.* 1.510ff); in particular Bernini cleverly takes the Apollo Belvedere – that most revered of ancient statues – and metamorphoses him into a sprinter. But Ovid's story is not only ebullient, there are disturbing undercurrents in the nymph's fear of rape and above all in the strangeness of her transformation to which Bernini also does justice. The contrasted textures of the sculpture convey the paradoxes of Ovid's description of the metamorphosis – heavy torpor seizing the running limbs, soft flesh ringed with bark, hair growing into leaves, swift feet sticking in clinging roots (548ff):

> vix prece finita torpor gravis occupat artus:
> mollia cinguntur tenui praecordia libro,
> in frondem crines, in ramos bracchia crescunt;
> pes modo tam velox pigris radicibus haeret,
> ora cacumen habet: remanet nitor unus in illa.
>
> Scarce had she finished, when her feet she found
> Benumbed with cold and fastened to the ground;
> A filmy rind about her body grows,
> Her hair to leaves, her arms extend to boughs.
> The nymph is all into a laurel gone,
> The smoothness of her skin remains alone. (Dryden)

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There is an intense, tactile, almost surreal concentration on the details of metamorphosis, particularly marked in the treatment of fingers and toes, the latter becoming, horribly, claw-like at the tips as they put down roots. Daphne's face seems to express fear and horror, which could be as much in response to her metamorphosis as to the imminent approach of the lustful god (for a different view see p. 160). In general the sculpture embodies a characteristic baroque paradox, on the one hand sweeping theatrical movement creating an impression of careless ease, on the other a technical perfection in the surfaces and a mastery of precise detail, not in the least impressionistic. The paradox is perfect for the combination of movement and stasis as the fleeing Daphne becomes 'root-bound', as Milton puts it in *Comus* (661). The witty, the erotic and the grotesque are miraculously fused as in the original, in an image at once polished and fluid, sprightly and troubling.

It seems likely that metamorphosis also has a profound if obscure psychological significance.[10] A particularly striking instance in literature which concerns the story of Apollo and Daphne occurs in a lyric by Petrarch (*Canzoniere* 23), in which the poet imagines himself transformed into a laurel, image at once of his beloved Laura and of poetry. The story of Daphne seems to have caught the imagination of artists of all kinds, perhaps because it could readily be taken as a 'metaphor for the pursuit of perfection'.[11] The best-known reference in English poetry occurs in Marvell's 'The Garden' (27–32):

> The gods that mortal beauty chase
> Still in a tree did end their race.
> Apollo hunted Daphne so,
> Only that she might laurel grow.
> And Pan did after Syrinx speed
> Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

There is a typical Ovidian ambivalence at work here, depending on whether we are dealing with intention or result. If Apollo is chasing Daphne for the purpose of stimulating new plant life, we have a clever paradox, mischievous in tone; however, if the god's lust for female flesh finds as its object only vegetation, there is a more melancholy undertow to the wit – and 'mortal beauty' certainly obliquely suggests the sort of moralisation inscribed on the Bernini statue.

Those to whom the violence in the *Metamorphoses* is merely a trivial gratification of a Roman taste for cruelty might have their view modified by contemplation of Titian's disturbing late masterpiece *The Flaying of Marsyas*.[12] Part of what is troubling in some Ovidian episodes is the combination of cruelty with a certain wit and detachment and the unruffled stylishness with which acts of violence are described; in consequence the reader is left uncertain of how to react. For example in Ovid's version itself of the story of Marsyas, the satyr, while being flayed by Apollo for his presumption in challenging him to a musical contest, is made to say, with pointed ingenuity, *quid me mihi detrahis?* (*Met.* 6.385 why do you tear me from myself?), while Ovid cleverly

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observes of his flayed body *nec quicquam nisi vulnus erat* (388 he was nothing but wound). The cleverness coexists with authentic pathos, horror and the mysterious sense of release in the transformation of the tears of the onlookers into the Marsyas, the clearest river in Phrygia (*Phrygiae liquidissimus amnis* 400), perhaps also reflecting the earlier exposure to vision of the victim's uncovered inwards (*perlucentes* 391). Titian's painting presents problems which if not identical are in some respects analogous. The sense of detachment emanating from all the characters (there is no pain in Marsyas' face and no writhing or contortion), the strange serenity of the painting with its muted but sensuous colour and its creamy surface so at odds with the violence of the subject, the thoughtful industry with which, like artists and without seeming brutality, the flayers perform their terrible work, all intensify the troubling horror of the image; while we see no raw nerves, the bucket gleams upon our attention with a sickening significance, and a small dog laps up blood. There is a telling combination of the impressionistic with precise detail like the sharp outline of the skin peeled away from Marsyas' body. As in Ovid, the artist's virtuosity seems to have outrun his human sympathy; some have thought the result so disgusting that they have questioned Titian's authorship. Yet, though it may have a kind of decadence, the image is not easily dismissed as merely trivial or callous, and it has the capacity to haunt the imagination. Titian's mythological paintings after Ovid (whose *Metamorphoses* he read in translation) are not in general exactly based on Ovid's words like Bernini's statue, rather, as Nigel Llewellyn shows, they are poetic evocations of the spirit of the original, towards which Titian seems to have had a special responsiveness (see Pls. 4, 8, 13).

2

The variousness of the response to Ovid (illustrated for particular stories in the essays by Niall Rudd and Jane Miller) mirrors the variety of Ovid's own writings. Ovid is sometimes thought of as monotonous, and partly because he wrote more voluminously than other Latin poets he occasionally repeated himself, particularly in the *Heroides* and the exile poems. But at the same time he is a protean artist, whereas images of him are frequently only two-dimensional. Recent criticism regularly emphasises the wit and humour (valued anew and no longer seen as proof of essential triviality) at the expense of other equally important qualities. For example the exuberance and rhetorical facility of his style is rightly stressed, but it is less often remarked that he can write with a simplicity which few Latin poets dare to venture. An instance is the bitter directness of his address to his friends in *Ex Ponto* 3.7, or these moving lines from *Tristia* 3.8 (8–10):[13]

> [ut] aspicerem patriae dulce repente solum,
> desertaeque domus vultus, memoresque sodales,
> caraque praecipue coniugis ora meae.

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> ...that I might see the sweet soil of my fatherland on a sudden and the look of my deserted home and my friends who remember me and especially the dear face of my wife...

It has been observed that Ovid's Lucretia (*Fasti* 2.723ff) is presented *less* rhetorically than Livy's (let alone Shakespeare's).[14]

Along with the cleverness the writing regularly displays poetic imagination of a high order, as two of Ovid's nineteenth-century admirers rightly insisted. 'Of all the ancient Romans, Ovid had the finest imagination' wrote W. S. Landor,[15] while James Henry, the engagingly verbose commentator on Virgil, unexpectedly declared for Ovid in some comments on *Met.* 15.603–4, *qualia succinctis, ubi trux insibilat eurus,* | *murmura pinetis fiunt* (such a murmur as comes from girt-up pine-woods when the fierce east wind whistles through them):

> Whoever has been in a pine wood will require no further comment on *succincta*, in its literal application to the female dress. A pine wood is indeed a wood of bare legs. Let no one say that Ovid is not a poet, or subscribe to Dryden's most unjust opinion of him. He was a more natural, more genial, more cordial, more imaginative, more playful poet not only than Dryden, but than our author, or any other Latin poet.[16]

Such strokes of imagination are to be found throughout Ovid's work. At the beginning of *Tristia* 4.3 Ovid asks the two Bears which never set to turn their shining faces towards Rome and his *domina* to see whether she is mindful of him or no; as R. G. M. Nisbet has observed, this fantasy about the stars is hard to match, and the picture beautifully emphasises the poet's loneliness as the vast night is contrasted with the lover's bed (23ff).[17] In *Remedia Amoris* 169ff Ovid shows he can draw as memorable vignettes as Horace in praise of the countryside, an unaccustomed theme:

> temporibus certis desectas alligat herbas
> et tonsam raro pectine verrit humum. (191–2)

> At set times the countryman binds the cut grasses, and sweeps the shaven ground with wide-toothed comb.

It is characteristic of Ovid to see the resemblances between a mown field and a man's head of hair (*pecten*, a comb, is here used for *furca*). Ovid's imagination is frequently of a plastic or visual kind, which helps to account for his influence on painters and sculptors; a particularly fine example is the rainbow simile in the story of Arachne (*Met.* 6.63ff), used to illustrate an artistic effect in a tapestry. Sometimes indeed a picture in Ovid may have been inspired by a work of art, for example Cupid bending his bow in *Amores* 1.1.21ff.

Likewise Ovid's mythological world is not only amusing, but rich in romance:[18] the delicate picture of Ariadne gradually awakening on her lonely island in *Heroides* 10, Leander gazing sadly across the deep towards Hero's tower, seeing or thinking that he sees (a Virgilian echo) her wakeful light (*Her.* 18.29ff), the moon glimmering on the water as he swims across to her (59–60;

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77ff) – Ovid is full of such touches. The poets of the Renaissance can point us towards this underemphasised aspect of his art. Here, for example, is Spenser (*FQ* III vi 45):

> And all about grew every sort of flowre,
> To which sad lovers were transformd of yore;
> Fresh *Hyacinthus*, *Phoebus* paramoure,
> And dearest loue,
> Foolish *Narcisse*, that likes the watry shore,
> Sad *Amaranthus*, made a flowre but late,
> Sad *Amaranthus*, in whose purple gore
> Me seemes I see *Amintas* wretched fate,
> To whom sweet Poets verse hath given endlesse date.

In this passage we have the pathos of the Ovidian transformations – 'sad', 'fresh', 'foolish' – rueful memories of distant untimely fatalities (with a presumably deliberate catch in the voice in the half-line 4, a Virgilian cadence which first appeared in the 1609 edition). The phrase about Narcissus 'that likes the watry shore' deftly conflates person and flower in true Ovidian fashion. With carefully controlled rhetoric the stanza then builds to its powerful climax as it moves into the present to lament a recently dead poet–lover, probably Sidney; there is an affective emotional repetition and a fine poise between resigned grief and the grandeur of the characteristically Ovidian claim for the power of poetry. The whole is suffused with a kind of sweet melancholy frequently found in such Ovidian imitations. Shakespeare can strike a not dissimilar note:

> In such a night
> Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
> And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
> And ran dismayed away.
> In such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
> Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
> To come again to Carthage.
> In such a night
> Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
> That did renew old Aeson.

In *The Merchant of Venice* V i, in alternating speeches, the lovers Lorenzo and Jessica relate the moonlit night in which they find themselves to episodes from four great love stories (Troilus and Cressida, Pyramus and Thisbe, Dido and Aeneas, Medea and Jason, the first from Chaucer, the remaining three Ovidian, though all also handled by Chaucer) before the mood evaporates into mild teasing. Since all four are in fact stories of tragic love, a modern critic might feel that Shakespeare is being wry or ironic at the expense of his complacent lovers (the following banter reminds us of the deception of Shylock), but the timbre of the verse lends little support to such a reading; the romantic sweetness has been isolated from stories which turn out tragic or squalid or sinister. The lines on Dido (which seem to derive from *Heroides* 10, Ariadne to Theseus, as

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well as 7, Dido to Aeneas) in particular are exquisitely modulated, with several romantic details, the willow branch of the forsaken lover, the wild sea bank, the word 'waft' suggesting gentle melancholy and yearning. Milton too sees the world of classical myth with a soft Ovidian focus:

> Not that fair field
> Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers
> Herself a fairer flower by gloomy Dis
> Was gathered... (*PL* 4.268–72)

I have argued elsewhere that Milton used the *Metamorphoses* as a gateway to faery lands forlorn,[19] and the Proserpina passage inspired by Ovid later haunted a long line of Romantic poets, including Keats, Shelley, Tennyson and Swinburne.

The romantic is not the only unfamiliar Ovid. Another is the poet of marriage. The slick cynic of the *Ars Amatoria* who enraged Augustus and mocked at Roman *gravitas* is an engaging figure, and it was not surprising that he should strike a chord in the 1960s as an apostle of sexual liberation. (W. R. Johnson revealingly talked in 1970 of Ovid's opposition to Augustus' 'anti-sex laws'.)[20] But Ovid's interest in human love and sexuality goes deeper than this, and shows him, in more respects than one, a child of his time. Augustus' attempts to promote marriage were not without their ironies: the original legislation had been brought forward by unmarried, childless consuls and lauded by the bachelor Horace, whilst the greatest poet of the new age devoted his energies to the portrayal of a tragic love-affair outside marriage. It was the disgraceful Ovid who was truly concerned with *socialis amor*, to use his own phrase (*Tr.* 5.14.28; *Pont.* 3.1.73). Perhaps not since Homer had a major poet written with more sympathetic interest about married love; one thinks for example of Ceyx and Alcyone, Cephalus and Procris, and Baucis and Philemon, or Ovid's own relationship with his third wife as conveyed in the exile poetry. In the fine *Tristia* 4.3 Ovid, in R. G. M. Nisbet's words, 'professes an Augustan idea of marriage, even if the celestial pattern is marred by the imperfections of earth'.[21] Allied to this is a feeling for children.[22] Such an interest had been characteristic of Hellenistic poetry, and was sympathetically taken up by a number of Latin writers. A tender verse in a wedding hymn by Catullus (61.209–13) looks forward to the birth of a child, the *parvulus Torquatus* who inspired the most intimate moment in the *Aeneid* (4.328–9) when Dido appeals to Aeneas by the child they might have had. But Ovid goes into further detail: *Heroides* 11 explores the feelings of the young mother Canace for her baby son, while in *Heroides* 8.89ff we see the effects on the child Hermione of her abandonment by her mother, Helen.

This familial Ovid is perhaps part of a more generally paradoxical figure, Ovid the moralist. The Middle Ages notoriously moralised Ovid, everywhere seeking the hidden senses, searching for what the Elizabethan poet Thomas

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Howell called 'Ovid's meaning strange / That wisdom hideth with some pleasant change,'[23] and the habit continued into the Renaissance and beyond, to fall eventual victim to the historicism of the Enlightenment. Certainly the majority of such readings seem to us reductive or arbitrary, but to see Ovid as unvaryingly amoral or trivial is a yet worse misreading. Ovid is no moraliser but his sympathetic interest in so many aspects of the human predicament has its own moral dimension. His belief in *cultus*, including the rejection of contemporary cant about the past, is a principled one, however debonair its expression; he prefers the present not because it is luxurious but because it is civilised (*Ars* 3.113–28). In *Ex Ponto* 2.9.47–8 he tells King Cotys that study of *ingenuae artes* softens character and prevents cruelty. One cannot imagine him recreating at length the harsh heroic world of traditional martial epic; he would surely have agreed with Dryden's comments on 'those ungodly man-killers whom we poets, when we flatter them, call heroes; a race of men who can never enjoy quiet in themselves, till they have taken it from all the world'.[24]

The variousness of Ovid's poetry is also to be found within individual poems, where Ovid is seldom to be tied down to a single attitude or tone, embarrassing his critics with his shifts from grave to gay. Many of the Ovidian works discussed in this volume are similarly kaleidoscopic. Music will afford some further instances. Few would think of Handel, composer of heroic operas and solemn oratorios, as a natural Ovidian, but so it proved; three of his most honeyed works are settings of texts which derive from Ovid, and they display that constellation of qualities which we have learned to see as Ovidian.[25] The cantata *Apollo e Dafne* belongs to Handel's early Hanover years. There is beguiling lyricism as in Dafne's opening aria with oboe and pizzicato strings, where she complacently expresses her preference for peace and calm over love (the libretto throughout alludes to the moral tradition though it is not obsessed by it). There is wit, particularly in the depiction of the pursuit, where the violin representing Dafne races at twice the speed of Apollo's plodding but insistent bassoon. There is a melancholy undertow in Apollo's seduction aria *Come rosa in su la spina* and thoughtful pathos in the final lament, where the word-play *pianta/pianto* is an Ovidian feature (*cara pianta co' miei pianti/il tuo verde irrigherò* – dear plant, with my plaints I shall water your green). The masque *Acis and Galatea* (*c.* 1718), written for performance at Cannons to an excellent libretto by Gay, with some help from Pope and others, offers an analogous range of tones but greater musical complexity. Again there is the romantic sweetness and languor with its underlying pastoral melancholy, most hauntingly in the stylised eroticism of Acis' air 'Love in her eyes sits playing'. Polyphemus is a fully drawn Ovidian character; the picture of the fearsome monster attempting to play love songs has an Ovidian quality of comedy, grotesqueness and pathos combined. 'Bring me a hundred reeds of decent growth / To make a pipe for my capacious mouth', he sings in a recitative – the music takes the last word to a comically low pitch, and then in the famous air 'O ruddier than

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the cherry' a high recorder (flageolet) wittily accompanies the bass voice in a jaunty and somewhat rustic-sounding melody for the perfect musical equivalent of Ovid's amusing cascade of comparisons (*Met.* 13.789ff). But the giant is also genuinely threatening, as the grand fugal chorus 'Wretched lovers' has already powerfully warned us, and Acis' death and Galatea's lament introduce a more straightforward plangency. This complex of emotions is delicately resolved by the metamorphosis and by the more tranquil sadness of Galatea's sublime air 'Heart, the seat of soft delight' with its accompanying chorus, as the violence is transmuted into something perpetually fresh and life-giving and Acis becomes a fountain and stream. Warbling treble recorders deftly suggest the flowing waters, and there is a moving and typically Ovidian equivocation about whether Acis – 'murm'ring still his gentle love' – is river or river god. The last of these Ovidian works is the secular oratorio *Semele*, first performed in 1744 and composed in Handel's maturest manner to another fine libretto, this time by Congreve, based on Ovid's story of Semele with some details from the Sleep episode in *Metamorphoses* 11 and the seduction of Zeus in *Iliad* 14. When the sleepy Somnus is suddenly aroused at Juno's insistent reminder that 'Pasithea shall be thine', the humour of the music is broad indeed. Wit and near-tragedy are tellingly juxtaposed when Jupiter tries to avoid immolating Semele ('My softest lightning yet I'll try, / And mildest melting bolt apply'). To the features we have seen in the earlier works Handel now adds a much richer female characterisation, with the jealous Juno and above all Semele herself, vain, silly, sexy, irresistible, to create the full Ovidian range of qualities. In *Semele* European music achieved its most complete Ovidian masterpiece.

3

Whatever, then, happened to Ovid? He has continued to influence writers in modern times, as Stephen Medcalf shows,[26] but, despite the pioneering work of L. P. Wilkinson, he has scarcely been restored to his rightful position as one of the central figures in the European tradition. Within the world of classical scholarship, books and articles are written about him, but with results that are in general less impressive than in the case of other great Latin poets. There are still no commentaries in English on substantial portions of his output. Some reasons for this comparative twentieth-century neglect may be suggested. First there are institutional factors. Classical scholarship tends to conservatism and Victorian attitudes to Ovid, investigated here by Norman Vance, continued to prevail in classical studies where equivalent attitudes had long been jettisoned elsewhere. Ovid is still today not a standard school author in quite the way that Virgil is, and it is possible to read classics in some universities without seriously studying his works, even the *Metamorphoses*. Secondly the genius of Ovid in his masterpiece the *Metamorphoses* is a genius for sheer narration; however refashioned the tale, the tale is the thing, and some people in the twentieth

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